

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AF-10 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 IO-12 INRE-00 RSR-01 /151 W

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P 142330 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4987

AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 1677

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN, UNSC, MX

SUBJECT: UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN PANAMA

REF: STATE 44820

SUMMARY: POLITICAL COUNSELOR DISCUSSED PANAMA SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING WITH DIRECTOR IN CHIEF FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS OF FOREIGN SECRETARIAT, MANUEL TELLO, ON MARCH 14. TELLO BELIEVES THAT WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME NOISY RHETORIC AND SPEECHES BY PANAMA AND CUBA, COUNCIL WILL END UP WITH RELATIVELY MILD RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING CONTINUED BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE CANAL BETWEEN U. S. AND PANAMA. END SUMMARY.

1. UPON LEARNING OF SUDDEN DECISION ANNOUNCED MARCH 13 THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA WOULD IN FACT ATTEND PANAMA SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING, CHARGE SOUGHT APPOINTMENT WITH HIM TO DISCUSS THE MEETING IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTEL. RABASA HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN UNAVAILABLE, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF NEED TO PREPARE HIMSELF FOR MEETING AS WELL AS MATTERS RELATING TO ECHEVERRIA'S WORLD TOUR AT THE END OF THE MONTH. POLITICAL COUNSELOR THEREFORE OBTAINED APPOINTMENT WITH MANUEL TELLO, THE SENIOR FOREIGN SECRETARIAT OFFICIAL CHARGED WITH INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. TELLO SAID THAT MEXICO HAD NOT INTENDED TO SEND A DELEGATION TO PANAMA UNTIL DECISION MADE BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA ON SUNDAY, MARCH

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11, THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY RABASA SHOULD GO. TELLO COULD NOT EXPLAIN THIS CHANGE IN POSITION EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT MEETING SEEMED INCREASINGLY LIKELY TO BE " IMPORTANT". TELLO SAID THAT HE AND RABASA WERE LEAVING AFTERNOON MARCH 14 FOR PANAMA, WHERE RABASA WOULD SPEAK ON MARCH 15, RETURNING TO MEXICO MARCH 16. TELLO HIMSELF WILL STAY FOR THE DURATION OF THE MEETING.

2. POLITICAL COUNSELOR WENT OVER SUBSTANCE REFTEL AS WELL AS OUR DESIRE TO AVOID ANY RESULTS FROM MEETING THAT WOULD INTERFERE WITH OUR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH PANAMA OVER THE CANAL. WE HAD PREVIOUSLY GIVEN TELLO TEXT OF U. S. POSITION PAPER IN STATE 38228, WHICH HE HAD READ AND WAS APPRECIATIVE OF. TELLO SAID IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT PANAMA CANAL WOULD BE RAISED DURING SC MEETING AND HE EXPECTED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF UNPLEASANT RHETORIC FROM FOREIGN MINISTER ROA OF CUBA, WITH GUANTANAMO CERTAINLY BEING HIGH- LIGHTED. HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT IF CUBANS ATTACKED U. S. ON THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE, PANAMANIAN WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO MATCH VEHEMENCE OF THEIR DENUNCIATIONS.

3. AS TO END RESULTS OF MEETING, TELLO BELIEVED THAT PANAMANIAN WERE ANXIOUS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING DEMONSTRATING PANAMA'S RESPONSIBLE STATESMANSHIP. PANAMA WOULD WANT ANY RESOLUTION ON THE CANAL TO BE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY, AND THEREFORE IT WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE U. S. TELLO UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WAS SUPPORT FOR A RESOLUTION MERELY RECOMMENDING THAT THE U. S. AND PANAMA CONTINUE THEIR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT.

4. TELLO CONCLUDED BY EXPRESSING A DESIRE TO CONSULT WITH U. S. DELEGATION AND SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO LUNCHEON WITH AMBASSADORS SCALI AND BENNETT IN MEXICO CITY ON MARCH 23.
DEAN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: martinjw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MEXICO01677
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730328/aaahtaz.tel
Line Count: 100
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 STATE 44820
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinjw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02-Oct-2001 by smithrj>; APPROVED <22 FEB 2002 by martinjw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 971202
Subject: UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN PANAMA
TAGS: PFOR, MX, PM, UNSC
To: ARA
PANAMA
SECSTATE WASHDC
USUN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005